

PS 0500: United Nations

William Spaniel

<https://williamspaniel.com/classes/IR22>

Outline

- Overview
- Veto power
- UNSC strategic voting
- UNSC bribery
- Rally 'round the flag effects
- General Assembly voting

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

MINURSO

UNMIL

MONUSCO

UNICEF

UNMISS

ICC

ECOSOC



UNMOGIP

UNSC

IAEA

UNOCI

UNAMA UNSMIL

UNAMID

UNMIK

UNFICYP

UNISFA

UNESCO

UNDOF

UNIFIL

UNTSO

MINUSTAH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNSC



General Assembly

- Consists of everyone
- Researchers use it to measure how much states have in common
- Cannot pass compulsory legislation

UNSC

- This is where the action is at!
- Anything important must go through the UNSC
- So we're going to focus on it



United Nations Security Council

Membership

Permanent Members



Membership

Permanent Members (Winners of WWII)



Membership

Permanent Members

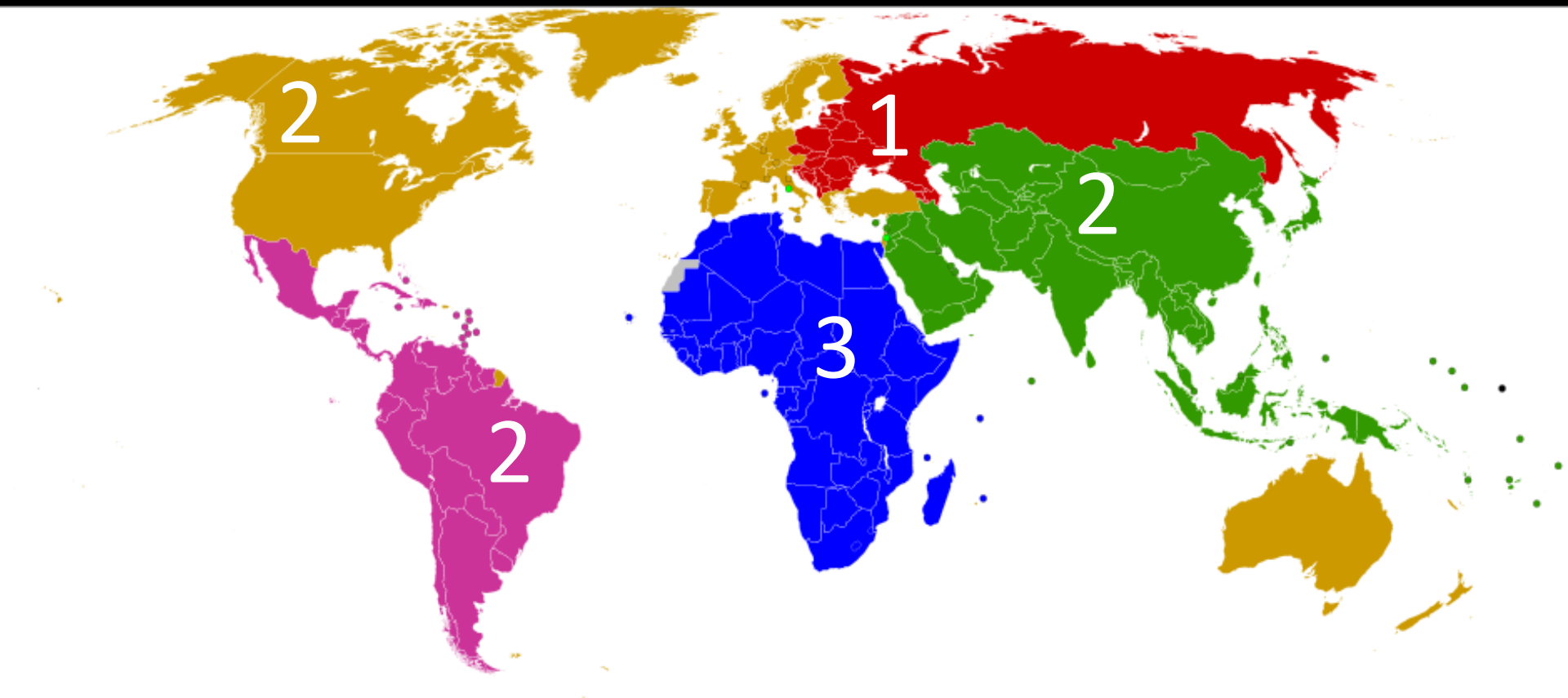


Non-Permanent Members (elected by regions for two year terms)



Nonpermanent Member Selection

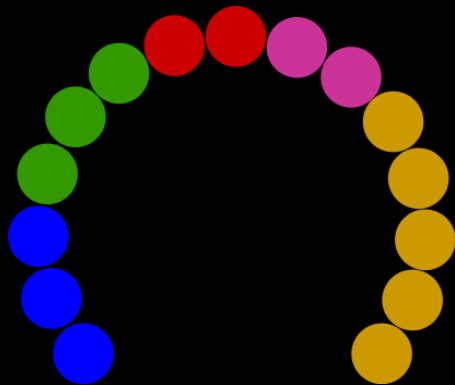
- Regional quotas



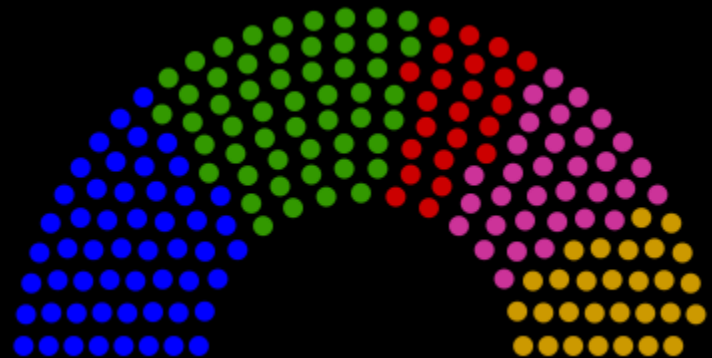




UNSC

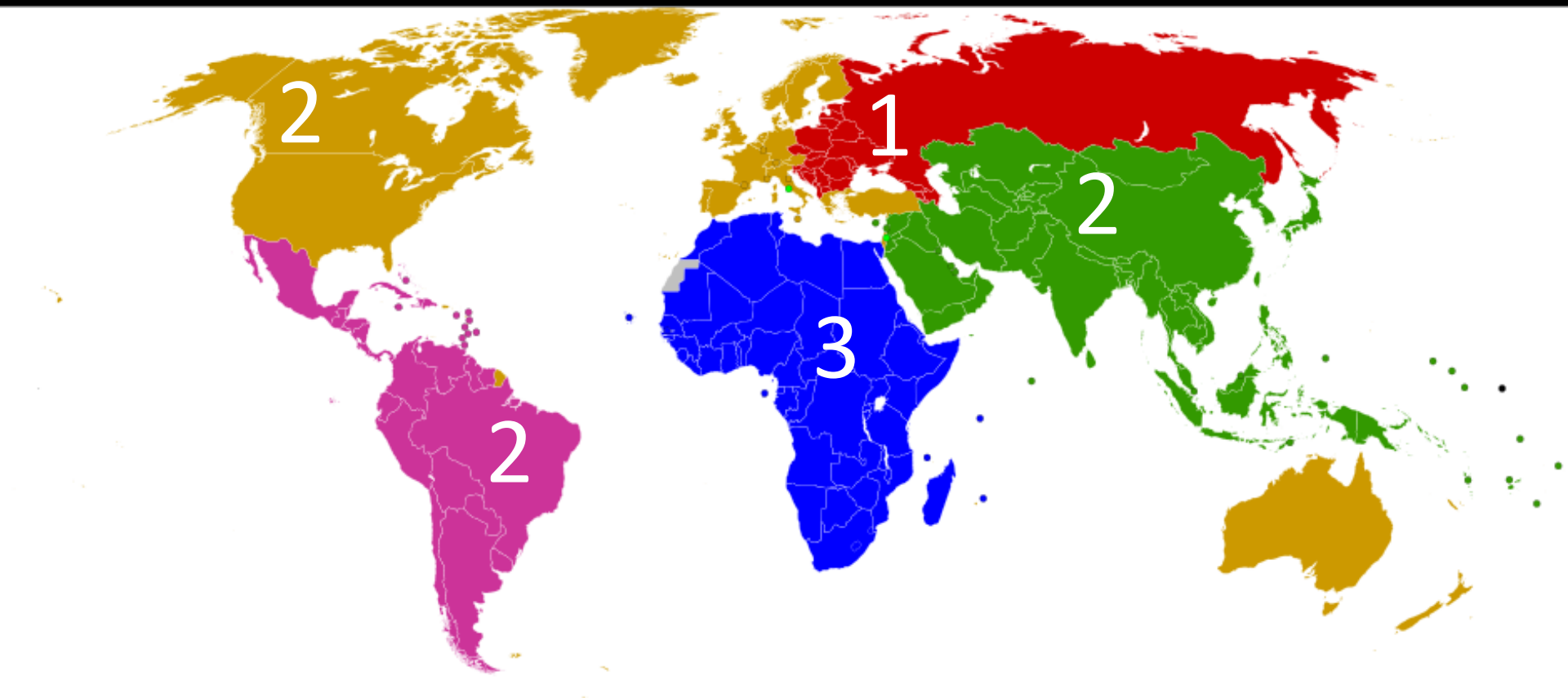


UNGA



Nonpermanent Member Selection

- Regional quotas
- “Arab swing state”



Nonpermanent Member Selection

- Regional quotas
- “Arab swing state”
- Extremely opaque

Nonpermanent Member Selection



- Nominees come from regional groups, but require 2/3rds approval from the GA
- Usually only one nominee per open slot

Uruguay and Armenia support each other at UN Security Council

🕒 18:50, 08.12.2014

Region: [World News](#), [Armenia](#)

Theme: [Politics](#)

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YEREVAN. – Uruguay and Armenia are working on various issues of international agenda, Uruguay Vice President Danilo Astori said during a joint press conference with Armenian parliament speaker Galust Sahakyan.

According to him, on many aspects the positions of

two countries are the same because they both build the policy based on highest human values.

Asked whether Armenia can respond to Uruguay for the latter's continued support in the international arena (Uruguay is the world's first state that recognized the Armenian Genocide – ed.), Astori said that Armenia supports the candidacy of Uruguay as a temporary member of UN Security Council in 2016-17.





📺 **Man falls out of his coffin during funeral in Indonesia**

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Uruguay, in turn, supports the candidacy of Armenia for 2032-33.



📺 **Man falls out of his coffin during funeral in Indonesia**



Most



 Belgium MFA 

@BelgiumMFA

...

  Belgium will run for a 7th mandate in the @UN Security Council in 2037-2038.

As a founding member of the United Nations ,
[#multilateralism](#) is at the core of Belgium's diplomatic DNA.

[#BelgiumUNSC](#)



**Belgium candidate
for a new UN Security
Council mandate**



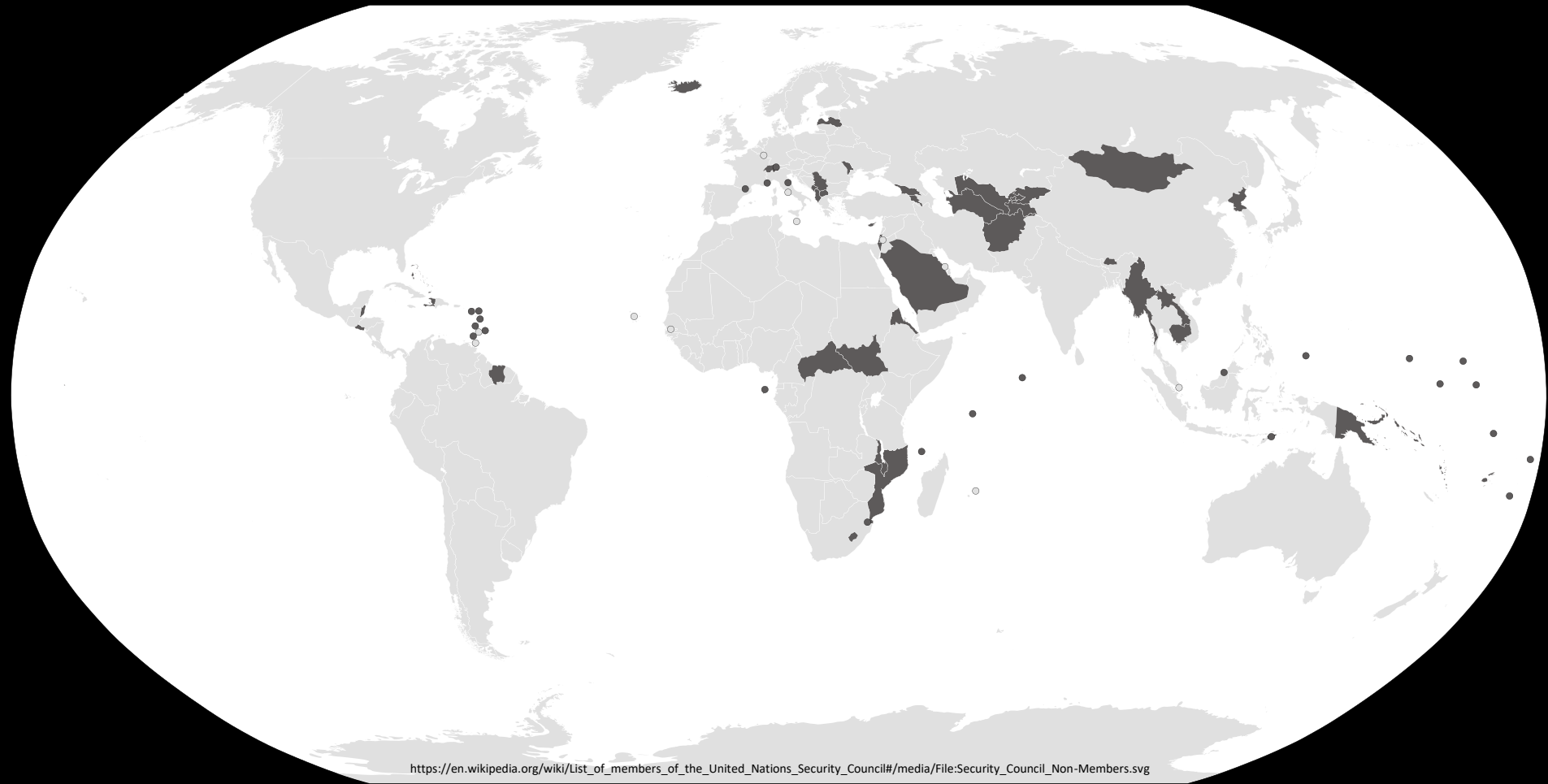
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 Belgium UN New York and 9 others

10:54 AM · Feb 3, 2021 · Twitter Web App

Most Frequent Members

- 11 times: Brazil and Japan
- 9 times: Argentina
- 8 times: India
- 7 times: Colombia, Italy, Pakistan
- 6 times: Belgium, Canada, (West) Germany, Poland



Outline

- Overview
- Veto power
- UNSC strategic voting
- UNSC bribery
- Rally 'round the flag effects
- General Assembly voting

UNSC Voting Rules

- Nine affirmative votes needed to pass a resolution
- Five permanent members all have veto power
 - The votes could be 14-1 and still fail if the 1 is the United States
 - Frequent for resolutions involving Israel
 - Abstentions allowed
 - A 14-0 vote passes the resolution

Why Veto Power?

- The permanent members are all really strong militarily
- For the UNSC to continue to exist, the militarily strong actors have to get their way

Why Veto Power?

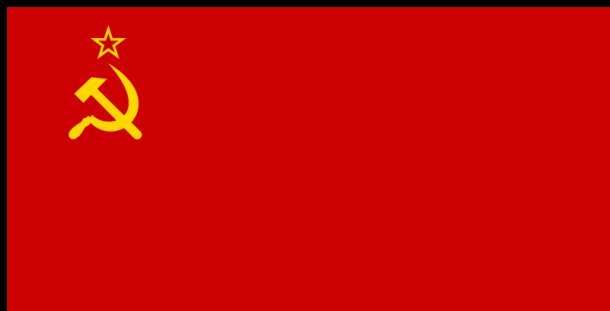
- The permanent members are all really strong militarily
- For the UNSC to continue to exist, the militarily strong actors have to get their way
 - Otherwise, they would ignore the institution consistently, thus causing it to lose any sense of legitimacy
- Very important to actually use the veto

(Which) China(?)

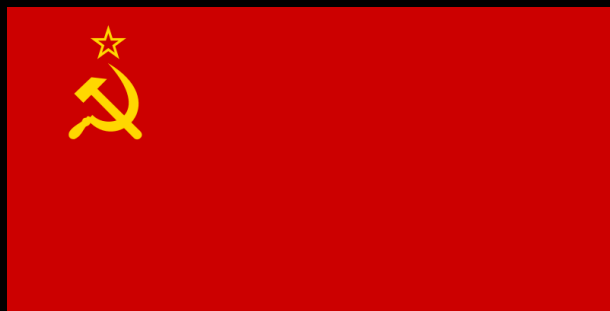
- China “won” World War II but was a gigantic mess
- Chinese Civil War started in 1927 and didn’t finish until 1950

(Which) China(?)

- China's permanent seat went to the *Republic of China* (ROC) in 1945
- ROC retreated to Taiwan in 1950 but retained the seat



We're
boycotting!



We're
boycotting!

Sweet!

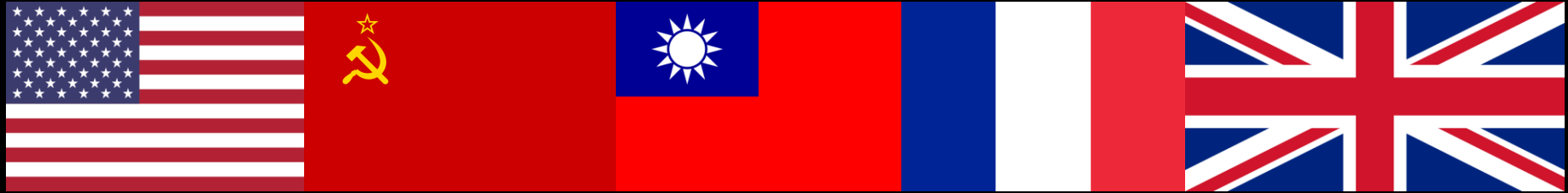


Worst. Plan. Ever.

- U.S. starts proposing hugely pro-American resolutions
- The UNSC does its bidding
- Soviet Union realizes its mistake and ends its boycott after eight months

Membership

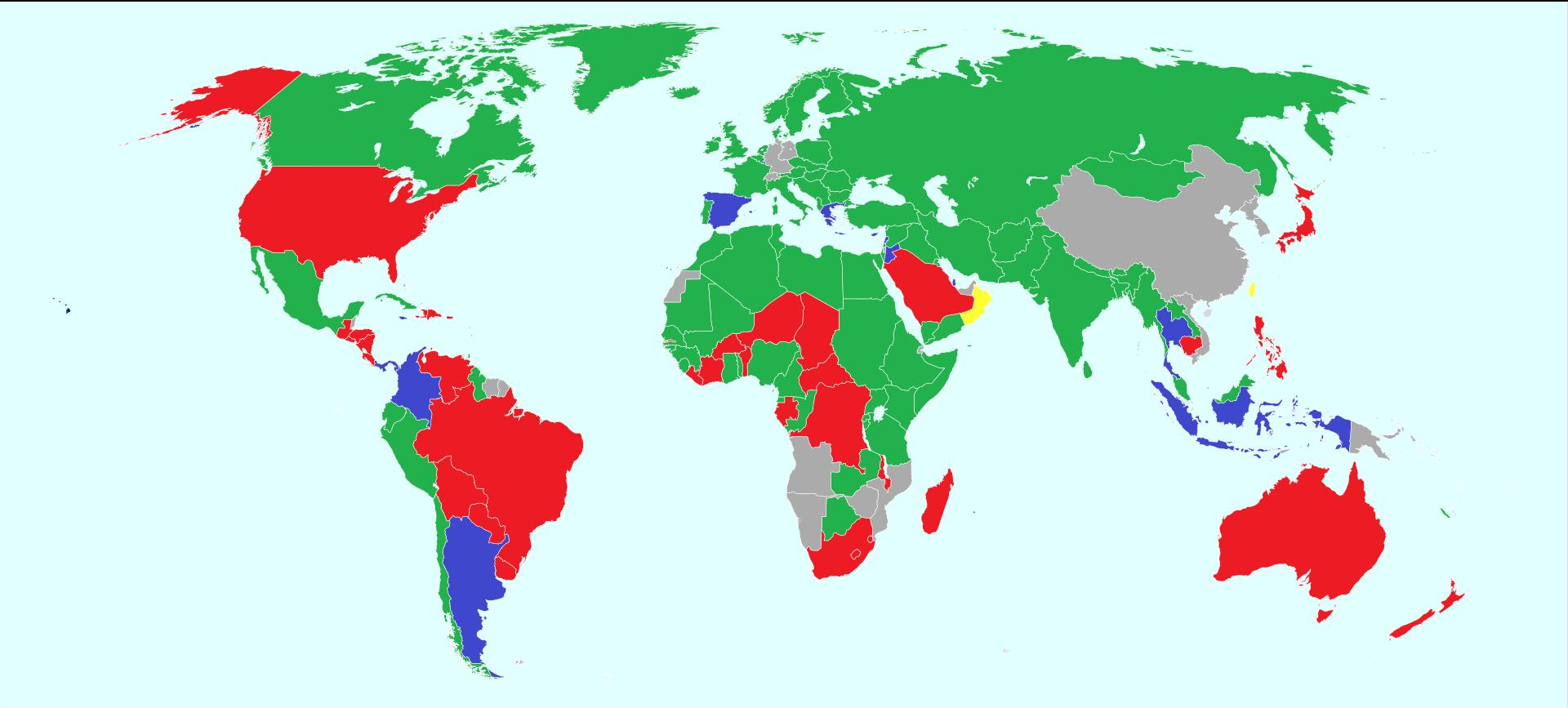
Permanent Members (Original)



Membership

Permanent Members (UNGA Resolution 2758)

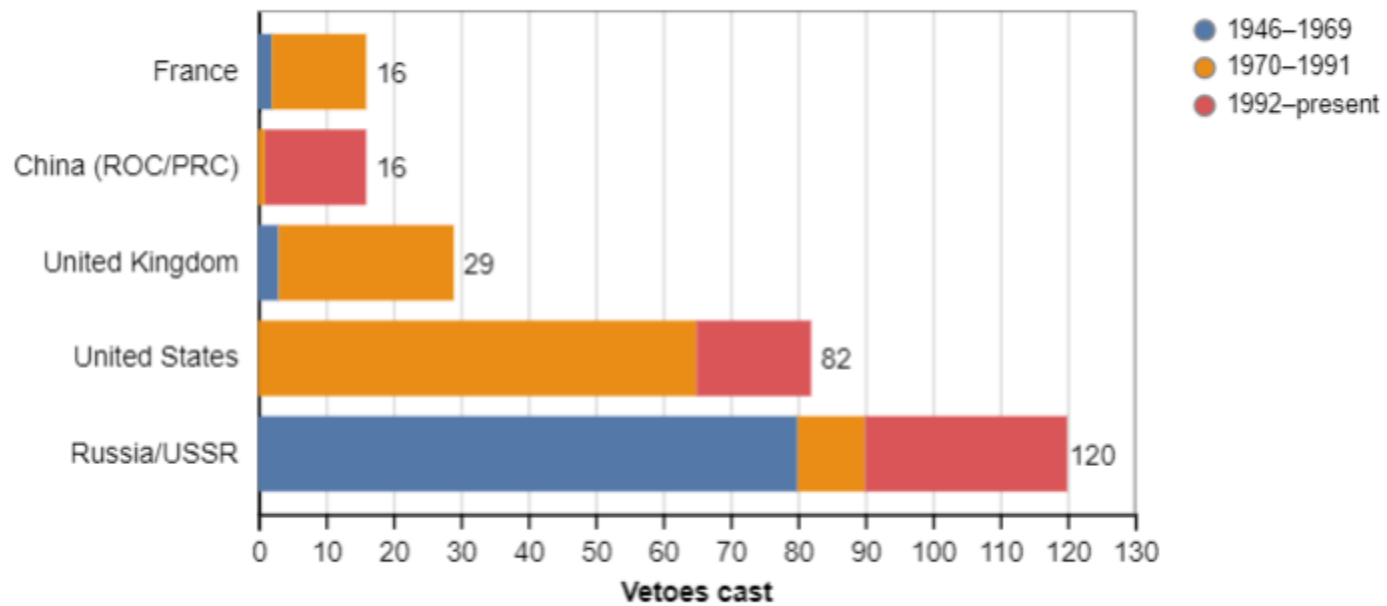




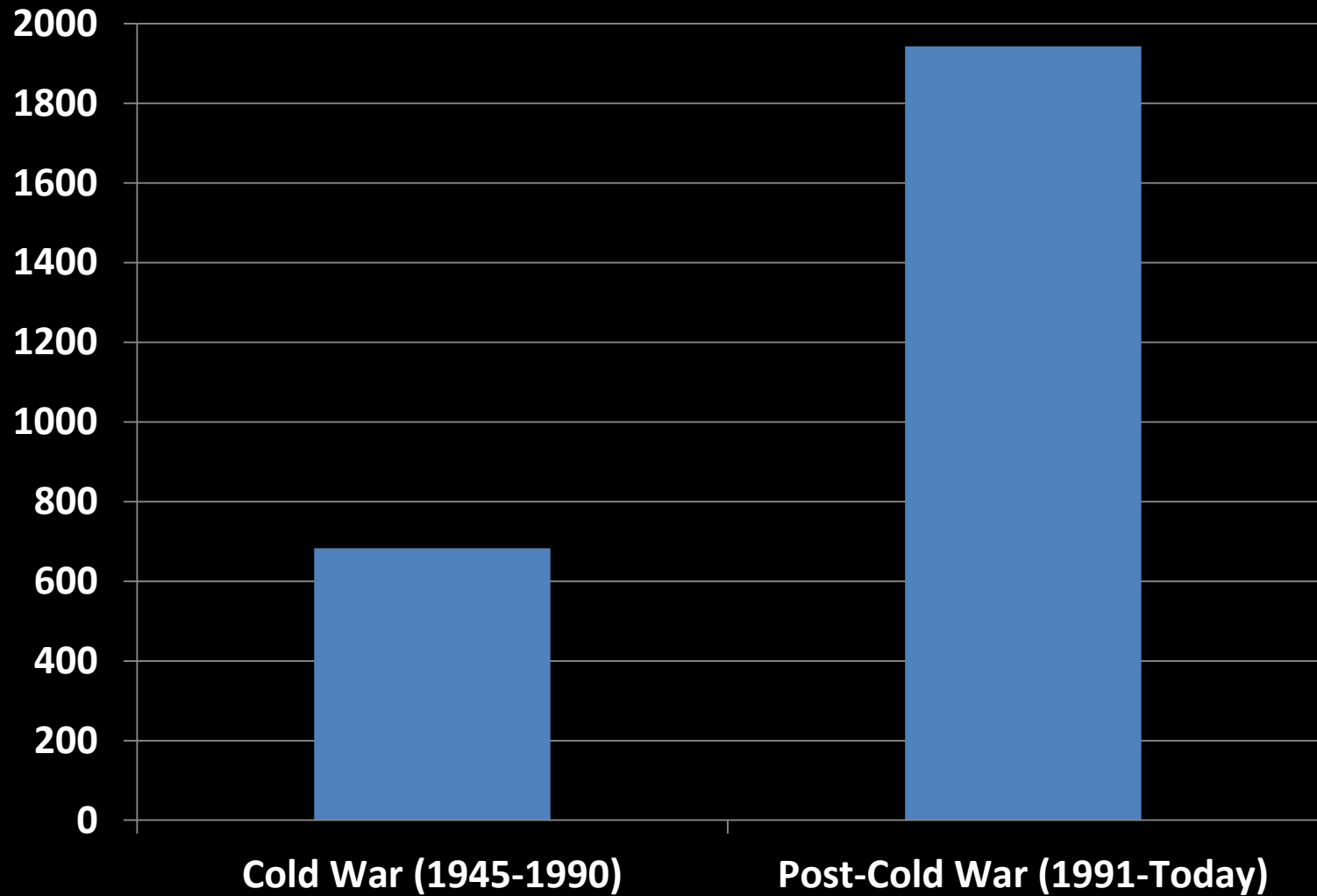
Membership

Permanent Members (Soviet Union splits, 1991)





Resolutions Passed



Outline

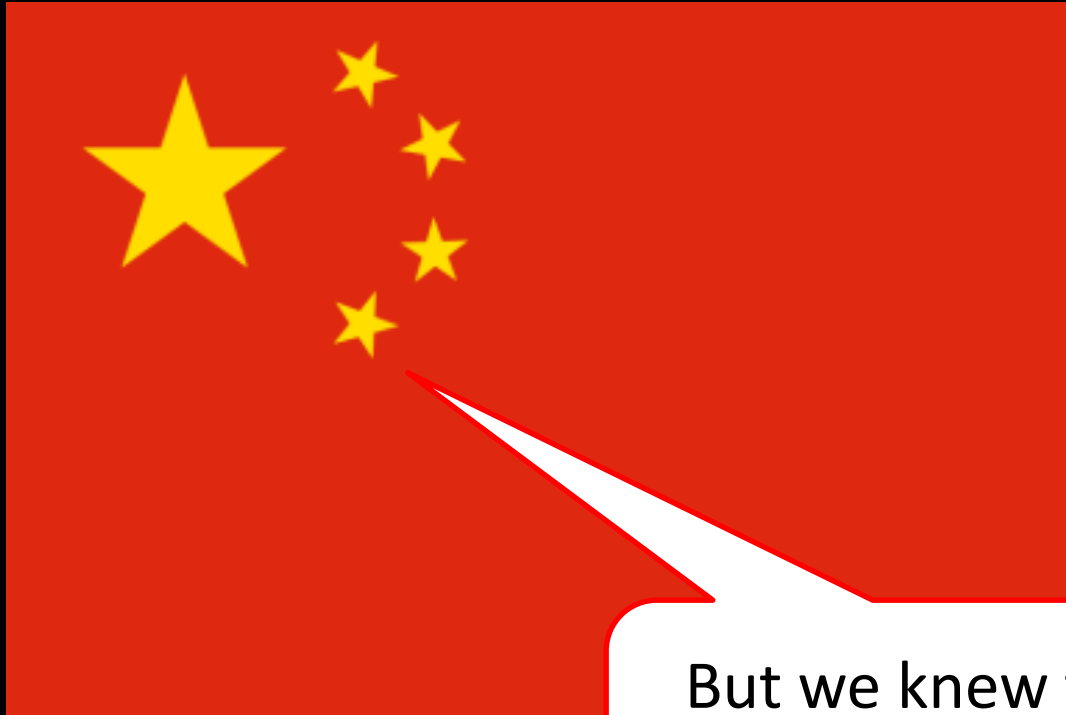
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Authorization to Use Force

- UNSCR 1973 authorized military action against Libya during the civil war
- No such authorization for Syria

The image features a large, solid red rectangle representing the flag of the People's Republic of China. In the upper-left corner of this rectangle, there is a large yellow five-pointed star, and to its right, there is an arc of five smaller yellow five-pointed stars. A white speech bubble with a red border and a red tail pointing towards the stars is located in the upper-right area of the red rectangle.

UNSCR 1973
was a disaster!



But we knew this
ahead of time and
still didn't veto it...

Why?

1. China made a mistake.
2. Something more nefarious is going on.

Insincere Voting

- UNSC members must consider the effects of a “yes” vote versus a “no” vote
- Tacit approval of a resolution may be better than no resolution

Benefits of a Resolution

- Having UNSC authorization leads to more inclusive alliances and cheaper costs to fight
 - But this often comes at the cost of scope
 - UNSC authorized action may be limited

Quick Definition

- Outside option: the best available plan of action if the primary option fails to work

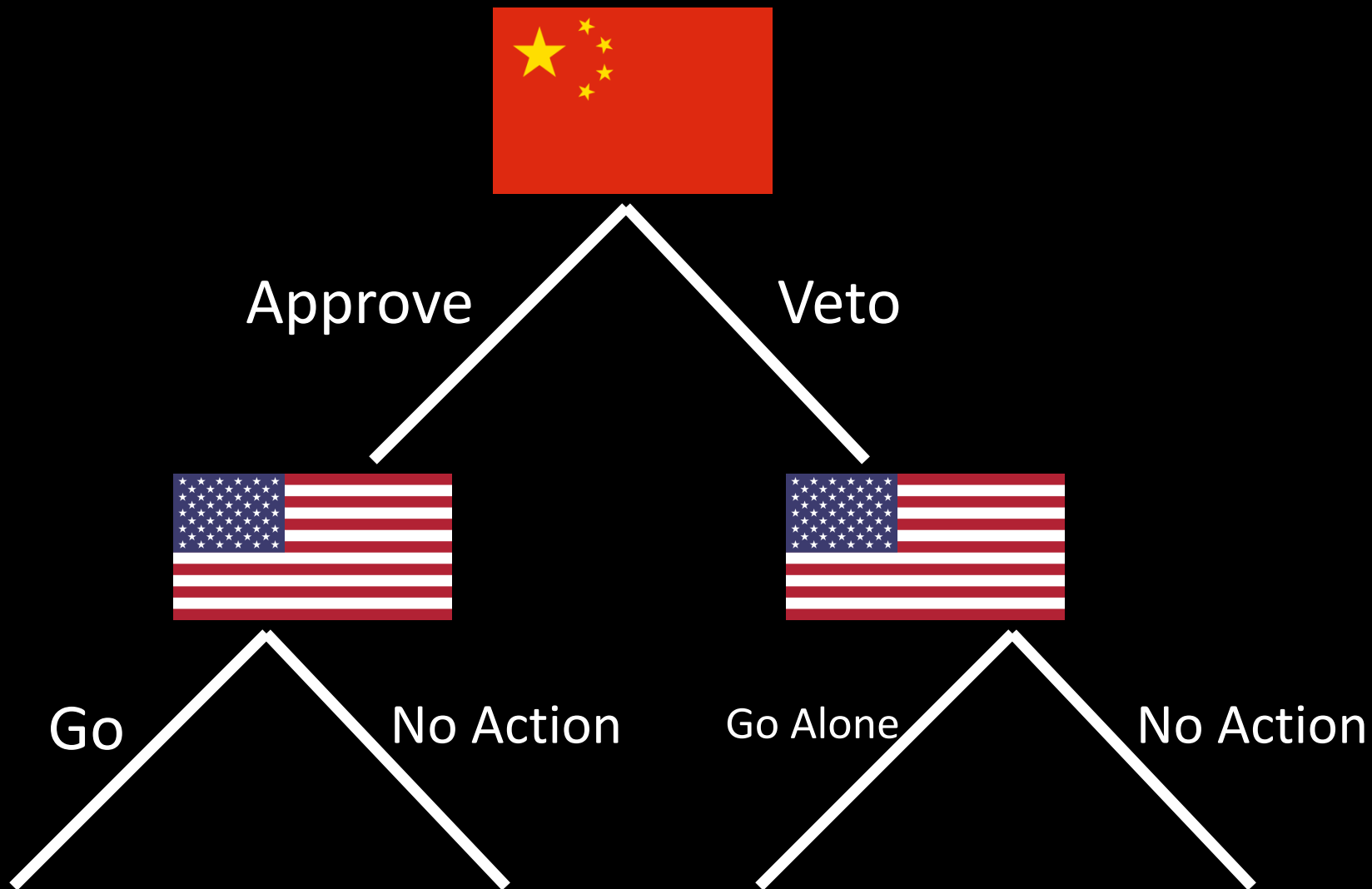
When Outside Options Are Good

United States

1. UNSC authorized action (cheaper, even if more limited)
2. Unilateral action (more expensive, but still worthwhile)
3. No action

China

1. No action
2. UNSC authorized action (limited in scope)
3. Unilateral American action (broad in scope)





Veto



Go Alone

No Action

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Approve



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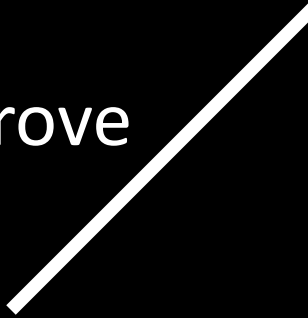
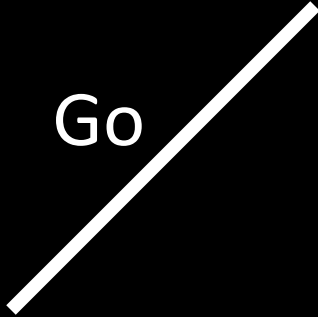
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Approve



Go





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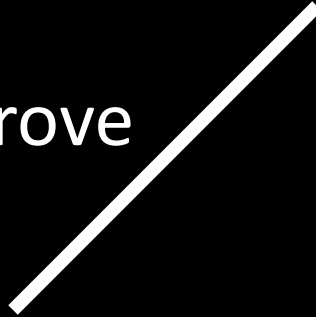
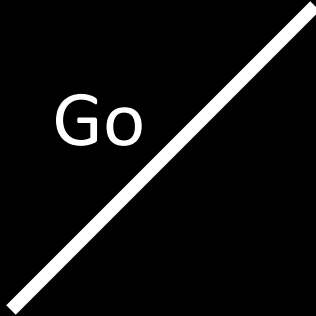
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Approve



Go



Insincere Voting

- Vetoing the proposal causes the U.S. to take more extreme action
- Tacit approval is better

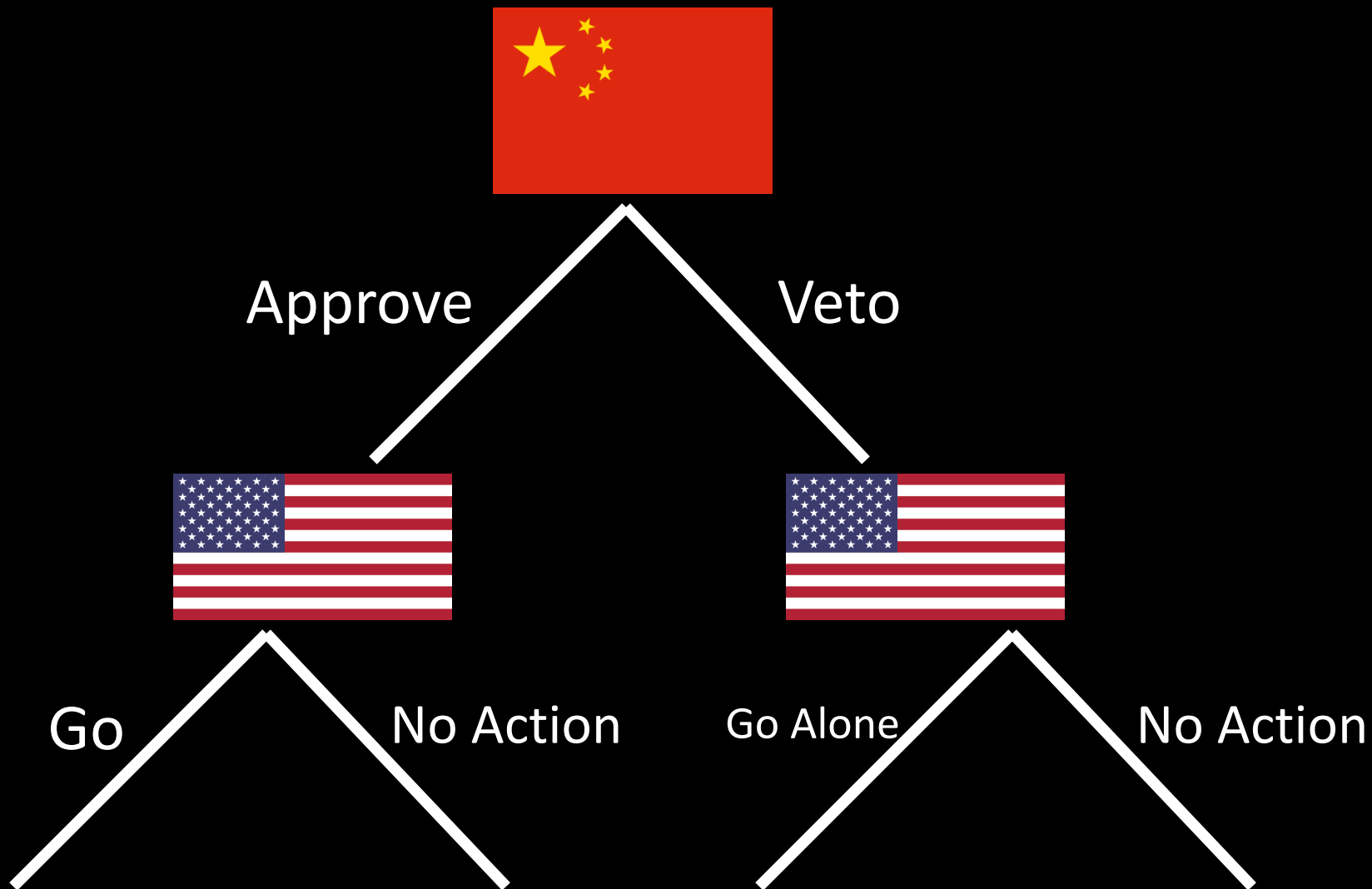
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Go



Approve

Veto



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Veto



No Action

Outside Options Matter

- When U.S.'s outside options are bad, China votes sincerely
- When they are good, China votes insincerely

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Unanimity

- Most UNSC resolutions have unanimous support
 - For resolutions 1901-2000, all but nine passed 15-0-0

Why?

1. States just love to get along
2. Resolutions only get brought up to vote if they will pass unanimously
3. Something more nefarious is going on

Bribery!

- How much does U.S. foreign aid increase when a state serves a two-year term on the Security Council?

Bribery!

- How much does U.S. foreign aid increase when a state serves a two-year term on the Security Council?
 - 59%!

The Primary Theory

- States do not feel too strongly about most issues on the docket
- The United States bribes the non-permanent members for their support

Potential Objections

- Correlation does not imply causation
- There is ongoing debate on whether the United States is truly bribing members

The Bribery-Lite Theory

- Cash exchanges aren't bribes but rather an expression of gratitude from the United States

The More Nuanced Argument

- The U.S. rarely punishes for non-compliance
- The “bribes” are just payments hoping to buy goodwill

The Counter Argument

- Being on the Security Council makes your needs more salient, and thus aid increases benignly

The Counter Argument

- Being more active in the international community both makes serving on the Security Council more likely and increases foreign aid

The Everything Argument

- These theories are not mutually exclusive
- Even if bribery does occur, the 59% figure vastly inflates the actual effect

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Rally 'Round the Flag

- The tendency for leaders' approval ratings to shoot up during a time of crisis



Dilemma

- Citizens want to support their leaders during crises when it is in the national interest
- But principal-agent problems

Information Asymmetries

- National leaders know whether a crisis is legitimate
- Citizens do not have access to that intelligence and are thus in the dark

Role of the UNSC

- Other states on the UNSC don't suffer from this information asymmetry
- Thus, they provide third-party verification of the authenticity of the crisis

UNSC Vote

- Vote yes? Crisis is real
- Vote no?
 1. Crisis is a sham
 2. Crisis is real but other countries are biased

Theory in Practice

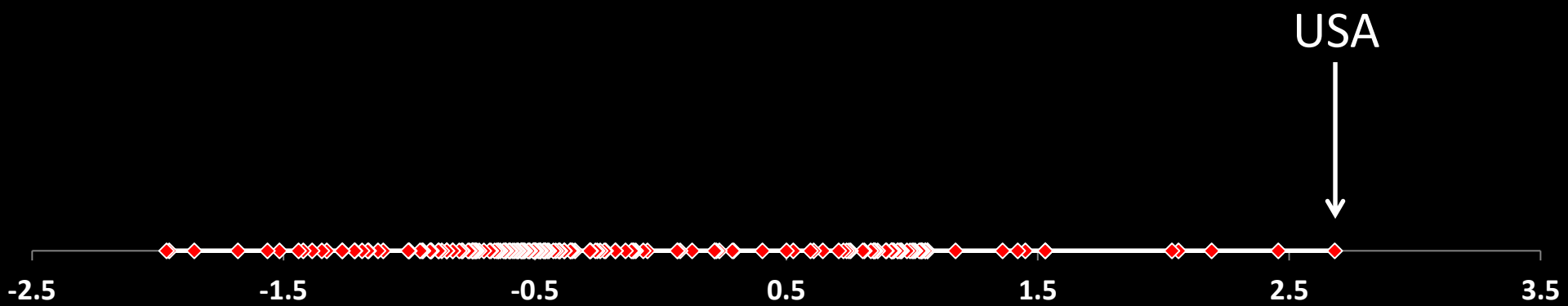
- Controlling for other factors, presidents under crisis receive 9% greater rallies with UNSC support than without

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Calculating Preferences

- UNGA votes are on the public record
- We can track these votes to create a “left-right” spectrum just like in domestic politics
 - Right: Loves the liberal order
 - Left: Not so much



2012

Closest to U.S.

Closest to U.S.

1. Israel

Palau

2. Canada

Micronesia

3. United Kingdom

Nauru, Marshall Islands

4. France

5. Australia

6. Czech Republic

7. Latvia

8. Lithuania

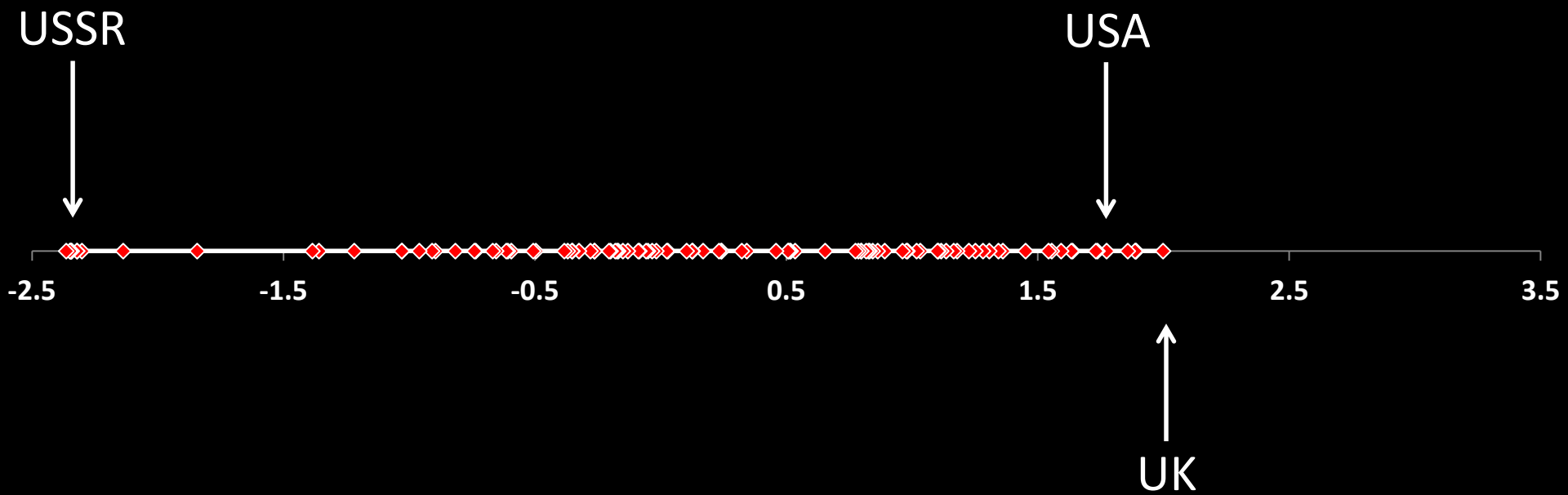
9. Slovakia

10. Estonia

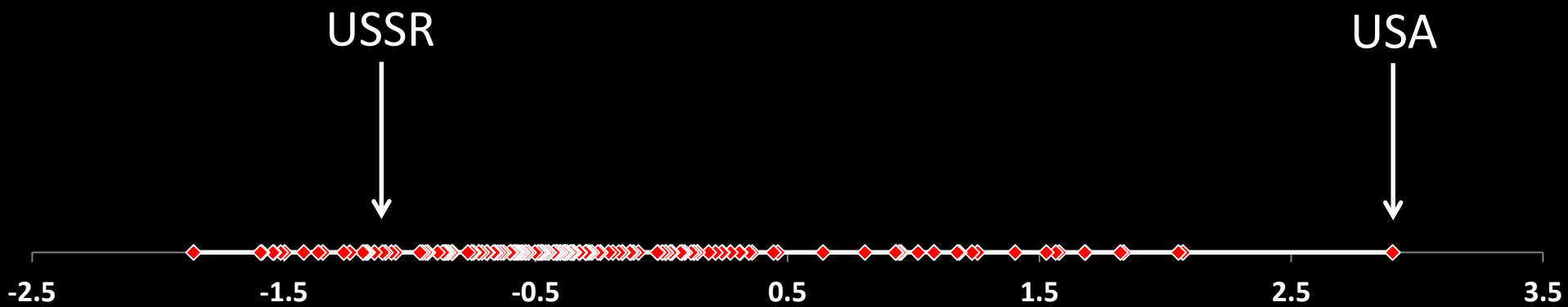
Furthest from U.S.

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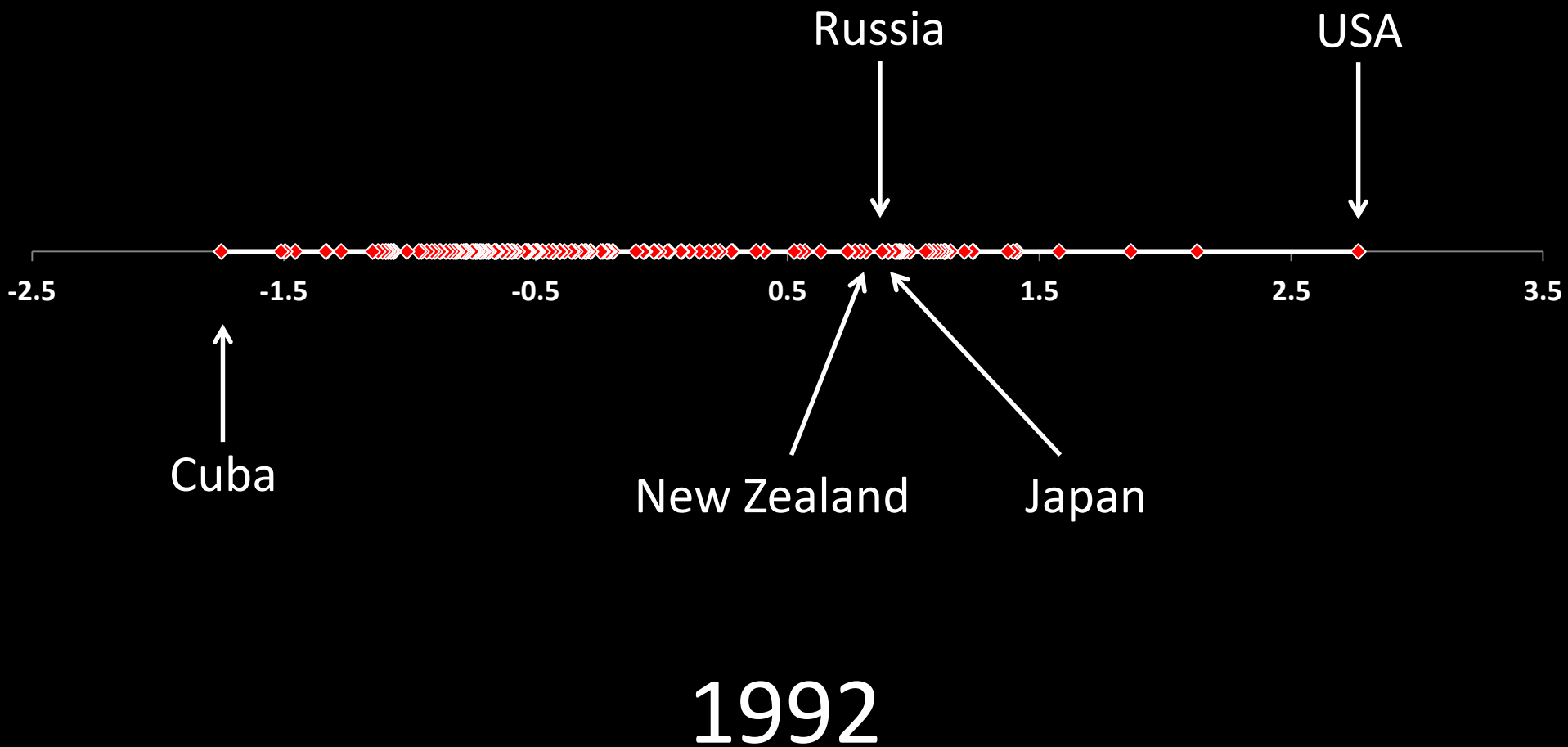
- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. North Korea | 6. Nicaragua |
| 2. Iran | 7. Egypt |
| 3. Syria | 8. Bolivia |
| 4. Cuba | 9. Oman |
| 5. Venezuela | 10. Zimbabwe |

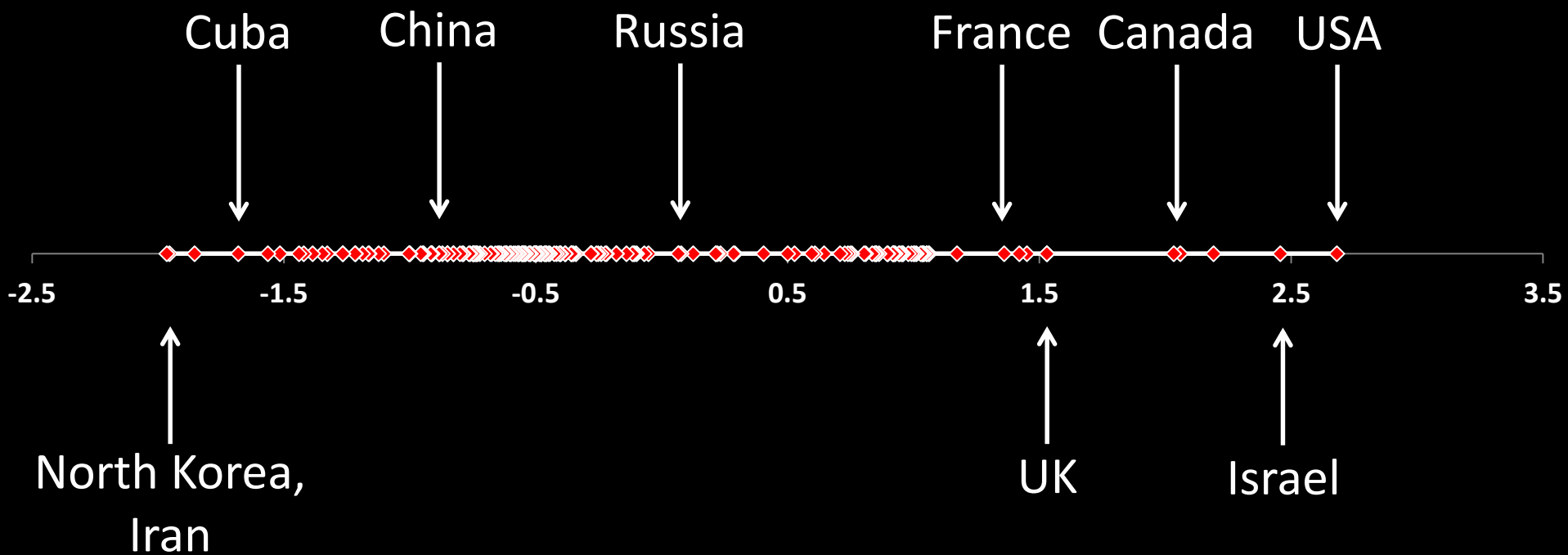


1962



1988





2012

Key Takeaway

- State preferences are not identical
- Seems obvious, but IR scholars believed for decades that all states were essentially identical except for size and power